

Generally bird life in the surrounding bush was at a low ebb. Honeyeaters were noticeably absent—they are so plentiful here when the *Templetonia* and *Dryandra* are in flower. The only flowering tree seen was the swamp banksia. In the sand hills on the western side the only birds met with were the Yellow-throated (Dusky) Miner, Brown Thornbill, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, King Parrot, Twentyeight and Western Rosella.

In the afternoon the members covered the whole eastern side of the lake from the shore to the top of the first sand hill. In places the sand hill was covered with a very dense *Acacia* thicket while in addition to the tuarts, which were present on the western side, there were many jarrah and zamia palms. It was different from the open country of the west. This forest country was carrying a number of birds, the commonest being the Brown Thornbill. A Fantailed Cuckoo was seen in the *Acacia* thickets and was also heard calling. A male Mistletoe-bird was seen and a Rufous Whistler heard. Other birds noted were the Magpie, Splendid Wren (in female plumage only), Raven, Yellow-tailed Thornbill, Grey Fantail (singing), Willie Wagtail, Red Wattle-bird, Silvereye, Searlet Robin, Western Warbler, Kookaburra and, near the lake, the Magpie Lark.

Two juvenile Stump-tailed Lizards (*Trachysaurus rugosus*) were found, one 7½ and the other 8 inches in length.

—A. H. ROBINSON.

## A NEW VARANUS FROM EAST KIMBERLEY

### *Varanus mertensi* sp.n.

By L. GLAUERT, W.A. Museum, Perth.

A slender species with well developed limbs and claws suitable for climbing.

Width of the head twice in the length, the height behind the eyes twice and one half times in the length; temporal region swollen, snout long and slender, depressed at the tip, as long as the distance from the anterior angle of the eye to the ear; canthus rostralis obtuse, slightly arched over the nostril which is nearly twice as far from the eye as from the tip of the snout. Nostril oval.

Limbs long and slender, the adpressed limbs overlap by the length of the hand. Tail long, compressed for the greater part of its length with a distinct double dorsal crest; length of the tail about 1.4 in the head and body.

Scalation.—Scales on the top of the head, large, flat and smooth, many bearing pustules, irregular in outline, largest between the eyes and around the interparietal, smallest on the snout; supraoculars about as large as the head scales with the central series of slightly larger transverse scales tending to become differentiated; temporals small but larger than the nuchals. Scales on the dorsal surface of the body small, oval, convex and smooth, becoming elongated towards the tail where they are distinctly

keeled. Ventrals smooth, larger than the dorsals, in about 120 rows from the gular fold to the insertion of the hind limbs. Scales on the tail keeled except near the base below where they resemble the ventrals, about 160 in a ring near the base of the tail, some rings incomplete as the subcaudals are slightly larger than the dorsals, a distinct double dorsal crest. Limbs with scales on the upper surface faintly keeled and larger than the smooth one on the inner surface. Digits long and slender with curved claws.

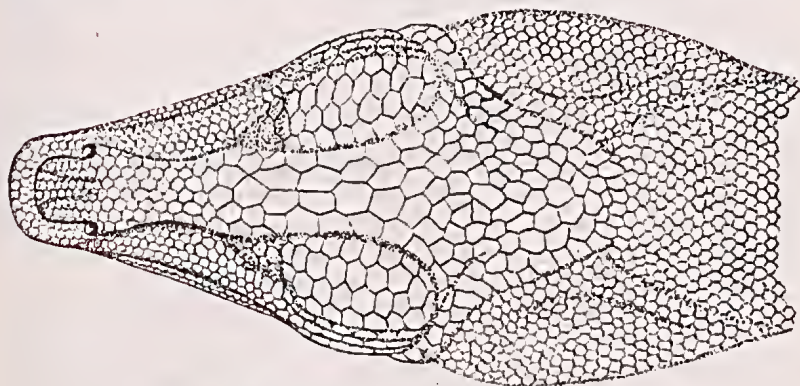
**Colour.**—(in spirits). Head olive brown, many scales blotched with white, chin and throat cream, immaculate. Body brown above with numerous blackish spots most of which have a white centre about the size of an individual scale scattered irregularly over the back and sides, but arranged in rings on the proximal half of the tail and on the outer aspect of the limbs. Lower surface and inner aspect of the limbs cream with dark spots, under surface of the tail near the vent similar, the rest unspotted.

**Measurements.**—(on account of the condition of the specimens these are only approximate). Total length, 315 mm.; head and body, 130 mm.; tail, 185 mm.; head length, 29 mm.; head width, 15.; head height between eyes, 9.5 mm.; fore limb and claw, 35 mm.; hind limb and claw, 48 mm.; fourth digit of hind limb, 15 mm.

**Locality.**—The holotype, R5819, was obtained on Moola Bulla Cattle Station near Halls Creek, East Kimberley, by Mr. H. W. Hall, who presented it to the W.A. Museum on February 20, 1936.

**Relationships.**—The species is closely related to *Varanus indicus* from which it differs in the position of the oval nostril, the sculation on the top of the head with the slightly differentiated supraoculars, whilst the scales on the tail with few exceptions form complete rings. From all other Western Australian species it is easily separated by the large flat scales on the top of the head.

I have pleasure in associating this lizard with Dr. Robert Mertens, whose monograph on the family ("Die Familie der Warane (Varanidae)", *Abh. senckenberg. naturf. Ges.*, 462, 465, 466, 1942) has been of the greatest assistance.



Head of *Varanus mertensi*, sp. n., x 3.

—O. Scymour, del.

## KEY TO THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SPECIES

- A. Tall laterally compressed for the greater part of its length.
  - a. Distance from the tip of the snout to the nostril more than half that from the nostril to the eye; scales on the head very small, larger than the supraoculars, not larger than the temporals, 122-147 smooth ventrals ..... *gouldii* (Gray).
  - b. Distance from the tip of the snout to the eye about half that from the nostril to the eye.
    - a1. Scales on the head large, irregular in outline, supraoculars differentiated, almost as large as the head scales ..... *mertensi* sp. n.
    - b1. Scales on the head small, regular, supraoculars small not differentiated.
      - a2. 118-135 slightly keeled ventrals, fourth toe of the hind foot with a row of enlarged scales forming a comb ..... *varius* (Shaw)
      - b2. 150-155 smooth ventrals, no comb on fourth toe ..... *giganteus* (Gray)
- B. Tail with basal portion not compressed.
  - a. Keels on the caudals projecting backwards to form sharp spines ..... *ueanthurus* (Blng.)
  - b. Keels on the caudals not forming sharp spines.
    - a1. Tail shorter than the head and body constricted at the base ..... *brevicauda* (Blng.)
    - b1. Tail longer than the head and body not constricted at the base.
      - a2. Scales on the top of the head keeled *eremius* (Lucas and Frost)
    - b2. Scales on the top of the head smooth.
      - a3. Scales on the top of the head large, irregular in outline, supraoculars differentiated ..... *semiremex* (Peters)
    - b3. Scales on the top of the head, small, regular, supraoculars not differentiated.
      - a4. Scales on the top of the thigh keeled. Two groups of spines at the base of the tail laterally.
        - a5. Back with 10-12 dark cross bands. *timorensis scalaris* Mertens
        - b5. Back with light ocelli *timorensis tristis* Schlegel
    - b4. Scales on the top of the thigh smooth, no groups of spines at the base of the tail, laterally.
      - a6. 62-74 ventrals, head and body spotted. *caudolineatus* (Blng.)
      - b6. 82-90 ventrals, head with linear marking. *gilleni* (Lucas and Frost)